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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Accelerating Inclusion and Mitigating Emissions (AIME) Forest-Based Livelihoods Consortium

Delivering Benefits to Forest-Dependent Communities in Latin America



BACKGROUND: THE PROBLEM

Indigenous peoples and traditional communities have been effective guardians of their forested territories, preventing large amounts of carbon from being released into the atmosphere through forest clearing and degradation. The important contributions of these forest guardians to climate change mitigation have resulted in surprisingly few benefits for them, however. The goal of AIME is to draw attention to and recognize this contribution via benefits delivered at scale to these local communities.

AIME's geographical focus is Latin America, where half of the world's tropical forests are found. One quarter of these forests are under some form of community control.

Forest-dependent communities are vulnerable to climate change such as the effects of extreme weather on their food security. Large-scale conservation of communities' forests supports their cultures and livelihoods, as well as generates vital benefits far beyond this region in the form of biodiversity, climate stability, maintenance of global hydrological cycles, traditional knowledge of medicinal plants, among others.

It is essential, then, for indigenous people and other forest-dependent communities to solidify the governance of their territories, thereby improving forest conservation, climate change mitigation, and the well-being of these communities and people. Forest-carbon financing mechanisms like **REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation)** offer just such an opportunity for rewarding indigenous groups' key role in maintaining forest coverage in Latin America, with appropriate safeguards.

WHAT IS AIME?

The **Forest-Based Livelihoods Consortium (FBL)**, a partnership of nine environmental and indigenous organizations* led by Forest Trends, has initiated a five-year program with the support of USAID to empower forest-dependent communities to more fully contribute to and directly benefit from climate change mitigation efforts. This program,

* Forest-Based Livelihoods Consortium members: Forest Trends, COICA, Earth Innovation Institute, EcoDecisión, Environmental Defense Fund, Gamebey – Metareila Association of the Surui People, IPAM, PRISMA, and Pronatura Sur.



called **Accelerating Inclusion and Mitigating Emissions (AIME)**, will operate in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Central America, and Mexico.

AIME will build capacity of indigenous peoples and other forest-based communities to improve the governance of their territories and forests, while supporting the design of natural-resource utilization activities that are REDD+ compatible and aligned with the “*Planes de Vida*” (Life Plans) of indigenous people. AIME will help key jurisdictions across Latin America expand processes and help institutional/policy frameworks to be more inclusive of the rights and views of such communities. It will also help private-sector actors better understand and value partnerships with indigenous and traditional communities.

HOW DOES AIME WORK?

The work of AIME begins in the forest communities themselves to:

- Support each community’s Life Plan, a roadmap for economic and social development, based on a participatory process and the culture of the community;
- Develop training programs and processes to build capacities for territorial governance and control in indigenous organizations;
- Ensure recognition, protection, and economic incentives for indigenous and community contributions to public good, such as forest conservation, climate change mitigation, and local benefits;
- Create tools that help indigenous people engage with the private sector more confidently and productively on resource management in general and carbon credits in particular;
- Improve the capacity of sub-national governments to play a critical role in community-based REDD+ programs, with a focus on developing legal, regulatory, and administrative frameworks to support fair inclusion of indigenous and Afro-descendent communities in REDD+;
- Bring community, local, and regional government and private-sector representatives together to develop new approaches to REDD+ projects.



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